

## Beannachtaí na nollag

ACCS wishes all our schools a Happy Christmas. In keeping with the spirit of Christmas, ACCS will make a donation to the CASA Respite Care Programme instead of sending Christmas Cards.

## 'Sustaining Relationships' ACCS In-School Management Conference 2016

The annual ACCS In-School Management Conference took place in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Limerick on 24th and 25th November 2016. The Conference affords the in-school management teams of Principals and Deputy Principals the opportunity to reflect on and inform their own practice. This time is essential for senior school leaders whose focus is often on the urgent with little space for their own reflective practice. The theme of the Conference 'Sustaining Relationships' was a continuation of the theme of the last two In-School Management Conferences, 'Sustaining the Leader' and 'Sustaining the Team'. Again there was a mix between workshops focused on exemplars of best practice in schools and guest speakers with expertise related to the chosen theme.

In the current climate the theme 'Sustaining Relationships' was seen as particularly apt given the challenges faced by management teams in schools. ACCS President, Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt, welcomed all delegates and formally opened the Conference before calling on the Chairperson of the ACCS In-School Management Sub Committee, Mr. Denis Ring, to introduce the first contributor Ms. Jacinta Kitt, Researcher and Organisational Advisor. Ms. Kitt set the tone for the conference with her excellent presentation 'Positive Behaviours, Relationships and Emotions, The Heart of Leadership in a School'. This presentation was followed by two workshops,

'Introduction to Restorative Practices' presented by Ms. Ann Ryan and Mr. Richie Walshe of St. Mark's National Schools, Tallaght and 'Using Technology to Enhance Teaching and Learning' presented by Mr. Mark Dowling and Mr. Brendan Cawley, Coláiste Pobail Setanta. The exemplars of best practice from schools were greatly appreciated by delegates. The workshops were followed by Area Meetings whose business it was to elect representatives to the In-School Management Sub Committee for 2016/17 and identify current issues in schools for discussion at an Open Forum the following day. The opening day of the Conference concluded with the Conference Gala Dinner.

As is traditional the Gala Dinner afforded the opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of retiring Principals and Deputy Principals to their schools and the ACCS. This year there were two recipients; Mr. John Hourihan, Principal of Carrigaline Community School, and Sr. Ann O'Donoghue, Principal of St. Aidan's Community School, Brookfield. Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt, President ACCS, and Mr. Paul Fiorentini, Vice President ACCS, presented the retirees with the traditional ACCS lamp.

Saturday morning opened with a detailed review of a draft 'Dignity at Work Policy' by Ms. Eileen Salmon, General Secretary ACCS, and Ms. Anne Marie Dillon, HR Manager ACCS. This very practical presentation afforded delegates the opportunity to engage in

consultation on the Policy and was very well received. Delegates then actively engaged in a presentation by Mr. Enda McNulty, Psychologist and Performance Coach, which was described by delegates as "energetic and fun while also challenging our perceptions". The formal activities of the Conference concluded with an Open Forum where an opportunity was afforded to consider current issues raised at the Area Meetings.

ACCS wishes to express its thanks to the In-School Management Sub Committee for organising such a relevant and enjoyable In-School Management Conference.



Sr. Ann O'Donoghue speaking on behalf of retiring Principals and Deputy Principals.

[www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie)

This newsletter is a private and confidential document for circulation only to Boards of Management and Principals. **Please circulate to Board Members.**

### THIS ISSUE

'Sustaining Relationships' ACCS In-School Management Conference 2016 **1**  
'Positive Behaviours, Relationships and Emotions, The Heart of Leadership in a School' **2**

'Using Technology to Enhance Teaching and Learning' Coláiste Pobail Setanta **3**  
'Introduction to Restorative Practices' St Mark's National Schools **3**

Draft Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure **4**  
Building and Sustaining a High Performance Culture in your School **4**

The Department of Education and Skills Action Plan for Education 2016 - 2019 **5**  
Recent relevant DES Circular Letters **5**

News and Events in our Schools **6-8**

# 'Positive Behaviours, Relationships and Emotions. The Heart of Leadership in a School'

The opening presentation of the Conference entitled 'Positive Behaviours, Relationships and Emotions. The Heart of Leadership in a School' was delivered by Ms. Jacinta Kitt, Researcher and Organisational Advisor. Ms. Kitt shared her considerable experience of visiting schools, advising on creating a positive working environment and assisting in resolving difficult relationships that have arisen. Despite the challenging nature of the topic being addressed Ms. Kitt's expertise and style of delivery ensured a most engaging and informative session.

Ms. Kitt opened the presentation stressing the need to create a positive, effective work environment in schools. This can be achieved by enhancing the positive resources of staff and building trusting, collegial and democratic relationships. She defines a positive effective work environment as: "a work environment that provides a high quality service in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, openness & equality."

This will place an emotional intelligence requirement on leadership which involves increasing positive emotions and decreasing negative emotions. It is important for leaders to set standards around managing behaviours and engagements in schools.

The focus of the presentation turned to managing conflict in schools. She stressed that leaders needed to become 'conflict competent' by understanding the causes of conflict and dealing with conflicts and not letting them fester. She stressed that where the conflict involved students and parents it is important to encourage win-win outcomes. It is important that all participants feel they can take something from the process.

Research into workplace bullying indicates it is as prevalent in schools as in other work places. Ms. Kitt described it as "the ultimate manifestation of disrespect and disregard and devastates dignity". It has the potential to devastate individuals and schools. A proactive approach will assist in preventing bullying and schools should clearly state "it's not ok to bully here".

The question of how leadership can address this issue effectively was considered. She identified the following as key elements in "getting it right":

- Communicate a vision and a mission in tangible terms
- Use supportive rather than defensive communication
- Build healthy Psychological Contracts
- Engage in Reflective Practice
- Have a modicum of Humility



Ms. Eileen Salmon, General Secretary ACCS, Mr. Denis Ring, Chairperson In-School Management Sub Committee, Ms. Jacinta Kitt, Researcher and Organisational Advisor, Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt, President ACCS, Mr. John Irwin, Assistant General Secretary ACCS.

In addressing why this is so important to get right Ms. Kitt stated, "toxic relationships are considered to be as major a risk factor for disease and death as smoking, physical inactivity, obesity, high blood pressure or cholesterol". She stated that behaviours, relationships and emotions are performance issues and not optional extras as they have an impact on physical and psychological health and wellbeing. This in turn affects the quality of service, motivation, job satisfaction, morale and stress in a school. However, these behaviours can be changed where people are asked to reflect on the impact of their behaviours. Positive interpersonal behaviour and relationships need to be encouraged and appreciated, while negative interpersonal behaviour and relationships need to be challenged and addressed.

Ms. Kitt concluded by describing a scenario of how often a particular member of staff is observed arriving at work and others wondering "what mood are they in today?" knowing this will determine the atmosphere in the staff room! The human reaction is often to pander to this person's needs which, in effect, is reinforcing the behaviour. If this behaviour is common and affecting the atmosphere in the school it must be challenged not reinforced.

In the New Year Ms. Kitt will be launching her book 'Positive Behaviours, Relationships and Emotions. The Heart of Leadership in a School'. This publication will be a must for all school leaders and we await its publication with great interest.



Delegates enjoy the opportunity for a discussion between presentations at the ACCS In-School Management Conference.



## 'Using Technology to Enhance Teaching and Learning' Coláiste Pobail Setanta

Mr. Mark Dowling, Deputy Principal and Mr. Brendan Cawley, Teacher and Microsoft in Education Expert outlined their journey in integrating ICT as a tool to enhance teaching and learning in Coláiste Pobail Setanta. They provided the context within which ICT is being integrated as a tool that supports student engagement.

The introduction of one-to-one devices for students is simply a part of their overall journey of promoting active teaching and learning methodologies. Since opening, the school has placed an emphasis on assessment for learning techniques. The decision was taken to introduce one hour classes and teachers are asked to ensure at least one active engagement technique involving group work or peer-to-peer learning is included in each lesson.

Mr. Dowling stressed the importance of investing in continuous professional development for the teaching staff. When it came to devices a number of different types were trialled. The decision to go with the Microsoft Surface was simply a preference in their school. He stated "the

device chosen is not important. It is how the device is used to enhance student learning that is important".

Mr. Dowling described how a whole school decision was taken to abandon the use of text books for 1st Year students and to develop teaching and learning materials using Microsoft OneNote. All staff and students can access the material through Office 365. The intention is to phase in this process throughout the whole school.

Mr. Cawley demonstrated a series of excellent resources created collaboratively by teachers in subject departments and how easy it is for students to access these resources using 365. The platform also provides the opportunity for staff and students to communicate and continue educational conversations outside the classroom. The full presentation with exemplars of resources and template online texts for consistency of use developed by staff can be accessed through the CPD tab on [www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie).

The presentation concluded with a description of services available to ACCS

from Microsoft. These services include migration to Office 365 at substantially reduced costs plus free CPD to assist in embedding the service in schools.



Mr. Brendan Cawley Teacher & MIE Expert, Coláiste Pobail Setanta addressing delegates.

## 'Introduction to Restorative Practices' St Mark's National Schools

Ms. Ann Ryan and Mr. Richie Walshe of St. Mark's National Schools outlined in detail the rationale, impact and processes involved in establishing Restorative Practices as a means of developing strong and happy communities. Independent research carried out in West Tallaght provides compelling evidence of the effectiveness of the introduction of Restorative Practices in the area:

- 43% reduction in overall disputes in homes, schools and families
- 87% of those who took part in Restorative Practice Training reported being better able to deal with conflict
- 82% reported being better able to manage problems within their workplaces or families as a result of Restorative Practice

They defined Restorative Practice as "a value based philosophy and ought to guide the way we act in all our dealings within our families, schools and in our communities". Central to this value based philosophy is setting high expectations focused on responsibilities and accountability, while providing support to achieve these expectations.

They outlined the key set of skills required in the restorative approach as:

- Listening
- Conflict Management
- Fairness
- Empathy
- Problem Solving

They stated, "it is all about building relationships and 90% of Restorative Practice is about prevention". The slide below from their presentation compares the punitive versus the restorative approach.

They continued by explaining that the key elements of how restorative questions work are that they:

- separate the person from the behaviour
- allow everyone to tell their story
- support people to listen to each other
- take everyone from the past, with a focus on what happened, to the future which is solution focused and repairing harm

In concluding, they emphasised the need to train personnel in the process with reference to the Restorative Practices Toolkit. The full presentation may be accessed through the CPD tab on [www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie).

Punitive	vs	Restorative
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What rule was broken?</li> <li>• Who is to blame?</li> <li>• What punishment / sanction is deserved?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happened?</li> <li>• Who has been harmed? How?</li> <li>• What needs to happen to repair the harm?</li> </ul>
M. Thornberry & P. Blood, 2013		Ann Ryan & Richie Walshe

# Draft Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure

Saturday morning at the Conference opened with a presentation by Ms. Eileen Salmon, General Secretary, and Ms. Anne Marie Dillon, HR Manager, of work to date in developing a Dignity at Work Policy and Procedures. The draft policy is very much in keeping with the sentiments expressed by Ms. Jacinta Kitt in her presentation on 'Positive Behaviours, Relationships and Emotions'. The policy has been drafted to assist management meeting their

responsibility to foster and support an environment which discourages bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment and where complaints are dealt with speedily and fairly. The draft policy also clearly states the expectations of all employees to assist in creating a positive work environment.

The presentation provided detail on the definitions of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment with exemplars of offending behaviour. Clear procedures are

outlined as to how a member of staff may access information regarding the procedure through a Contact Person within the school. There are progressive stages identified to assist in resolving any issues that may arise.

The Policy will now be discussed with the relevant Unions with a view to establishing agreed procedures. Once agreed, training for key personnel identified in the policy will be provided.

## 'Building and Sustaining a High Performance Culture in your School'

Mr. Enda McNulty, Psychologist and Performance Coach, warned delegates that if they expected a standard presentation and powerpoint this was not going to be it! He continued, "if you want energy and a presentation that will challenge you, this is for you". Given feedback from delegates who commented that the presentation was energetic, stimulating, fun and challenging, he certainly lived up to his description of what was to follow. With regular activities, participants at the presentation remained engaged and focused. It is difficult to capture the nature of such a presentation, you really needed to be present and live the experience.

In 2005 Mr. McNulty, All Ireland winner and All Star with Armagh, established the company, Motiv8. Its mission: 'to inspire, coach and guide individuals and teams to make the most of their potential in the sports, business and educational sectors.' He introduced his presentation stating while he has no educational expertise he has a clear understanding of performance and how to maximise performance. He spoke from experience when he considered the achievements of the Armagh senior football team of the early 2000s. His focus was not solely on what they achieved but what they failed to achieve given their potential. He concluded that this regularly occurs in organisations where they fail to regenerate themselves and live on past glories.

He posed the question to all present, did they as school leaders see the need for radical change in Irish education? If so were their schools ready to deliver change? He saw technological advances having a major impact on education and encouraged schools to embrace such change. He contended that if schools were to remain relevant they needed to embrace such technologies to ensure student engagement.

On an organisational level he urged schools to challenge performance at all levels. While acknowledging that Ireland has



Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt, President ACCS, Mr. Enda McNulty, Motiv8, Ms. Eileen Salmon, General Secretary ACCS, Mr. John McKennedy, Principal St. Colmcille's Community School.

a good educational system he challenged people to aim to create the best educational system. Mediocre performance from people needs to be challenged. There is a need on occasion to see things from different perspectives and move out of your comfort zone.

Concluding his presentation Mr. McNulty asked all present to schedule a meeting over the next week with themselves. The purpose

of the meeting is to allow time to reflect on their own performance and how they are influencing a culture of high performance within their own school.

In his summation Chairperson of the session Mr. John McKennedy, thanked Enda sincerely on behalf of all delegates for his thought provoking, active, engaging presentation which certainly challenged our perspectives.

## In-School Management Sub Committee

At the recent In-School Management Conference the following representatives were elected to the In-School Management Sub Committee of ACCS:

<b>Connacht:</b>	Mr. Willie Culkeen & Ms. Majella Morrison
<b>Dublin:</b>	Mr. John McKennedy & Ms. Bríd Ní Annracháin
<b>Leinster:</b>	Mr. Joe Sweeney & Ms. Anne Smyth
<b>Munster:</b>	Mr. Denis Ring & Ms. Bernie Heffernan
<b>Ulster:</b>	Ms. Frances Boner & Ms. Ceola McGowan

# The Department of Education and Skills Action Plan for Education 2016 - 2019

The Action Plan for Education 2016 – 2019 which “aims at making the Irish education and training service the best in Europe by 2026”, was launched by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny, Minister for Education and Skills Richard Bruton and Minister of State for Training, Skills and Innovation John Halligan, on September 15th, 2016. The Plan states, “this is a realistic ambition given Ireland already has a top 5 position in Europe in several important spheres (for example, post-primary literacy, third level participation, take up of STEM at third level) and a top 10 position in others (educational attainment, innovation, low dropout from school)”.

The Action Plan has five goals:

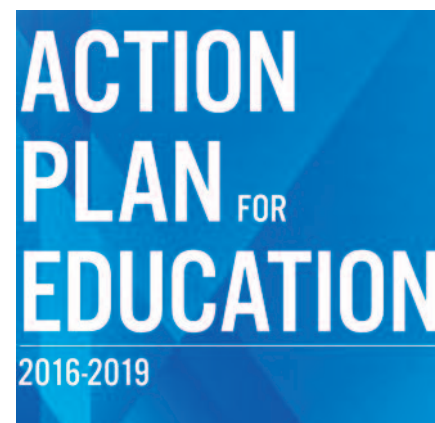
1. Improve the learning experience and the success of learners
2. Improve the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs
3. Help those delivering education services to continually improve
4. Build stronger bridges between education and the wider community
5. Improve national planning and support services

The Action Plan will be implemented across 2016-2019, with timelines and lead responsibility assigned. Quarterly implementation reports and continuous

consultation with stakeholders will remain central to the process.

The Key Actions applicable to second level include:

- Increasing the take up of Mental Health Programmes, strengthening Guidance Counselling and strengthening NEPS with a new focus on whole-school policies
- Implementing the new Framework for Junior Cycle
- Extending coding and ICT options in schools
- Putting a new plan in place for DEIS schools
- Implementing an improved model for allocating teaching resources for children with special educational needs
- Mapping out a plan to deliver more multi/non-denominational schools
- Improve the legislation around Admissions, Parents and Learners Charter and adjudication on complaints/Ombudsman
- Providing additional teachers to support our goals
- Strengthening school leadership and middle management
- Making time available for teachers to develop new learning methods with top-class professional support
- Implementing a new quality framework for schools with a new emphasis on self-evaluation, improvement plans and peer



collaboration

- Developing funds to promote Excellence and Innovation throughout Education and Training
  - Publishing a detailed implementation plan for Apprenticeships and Traineeships
  - Establishing a framework that helps schools reduce costs bearing on parents
- ACCS welcomes the publication of the Action Plan for Education 2016-2019 and looks forward to working closely with the Department of Education and Skills on the implementation of this ambitious Plan for Irish Education.

The full plan can be accessed at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

## Recent relevant DES Circular Letters

<b>CL 77/2016</b>	Revision of Pension-related Deduction With Effect From 1 January 2017
<b>CL 76/2016</b>	Withdrawal from Supervision and Substitution (S&S) Duties by ASTI Members on 7 November 2016 – Notification to DES Payroll Section
<b>CL 72/2016</b>	Minor adjustment to the Leaving Certificate Chemistry Syllabus
<b>CL 71/2016</b>	Withdrawal from Supervision and Substitution Duties (S&S) by ASTI Members
<b>CL 70/2016</b>	Work Stoppages by ASTI Members
<b>CL 63/2016</b>	Revised procedure for October Returns of Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) students to the Department of Education and Skills for 2016/17 and future years
<b>CL 61/2016</b>	Governance Manual for Community & Comprehensive Schools
<b>CL 59/2016</b>	Revised Procedure and Sequence for Filling Available Teacher Posts/Hours
<b>CL 58/2016</b>	Paternity Leave Scheme for Special Needs Assistants
<b>CL 57/2016</b>	Paternity Leave Scheme for Registered Teachers
<b>CL 53/2016</b>	HSE Post-Primary School Vaccination Programme 2016/2017

For a complete list of relevant DES Circulars please refer to the ACCS website, [www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie), and follow the DES tab → Relevant DES Circulars.



# News and Events in our Schools

## Ballincollig Community School – Educating the Community for 40 years

Ballincollig Community School received its first students in September 1976. Since its inception, the school has held pride of place in the community of Ballincollig and surrounding areas.

A number of events have been organised to celebrate the 40th Anniversary milestone in the school's history. Recently Transition Year and Leaving Cert Applied students filled the auditorium on three consecutive nights with a highly successful production of "Mamma Mia/Take A Chance on Me".

The 3rd and final night was deemed to be the gala performance with a number of invited guests in attendance, including former Principals Mr. Dan Murray, Mr. Sean Slowey and Deputy Principal Mr. Ted Kennelly. We were also delighted to welcome President of the ACCS, Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt who was among the guests on the night. The school has plans to launch a new website during the academic year and indeed formalise a Past Pupils Union to mark the occasion.



TY and LCA students in the Gala Performance of Mamma Mia/Take a Chance on Me to start a series of events to celebrate the 40th Anniversary Celebrations of Ballincollig Community School.

The culmination of the school's celebrations will take place towards the end of the academic year when the

school will hold a community celebration day in May.

*Kathleen Lowney, Principal*

## Leabhar nua seolta agus aifreann ceiliúrtha easpaig do 50 bliain de Scoil Chuimsitheach Chiaráin...



An téaspag Fionntán Ó Monacháin ag léamh an Aifrinn.

Rinne Easpag Dheoise Chill Dalua Fionntán Ó Monacháin Aifreann ceiliúrtha 50 bliain Scoil Chuimsitheach Na Ceathrún Rua a léamh. Seoladh leabhar sa scoil ina dhiaidh chomh maith. Pictiúir le Tuairisc.ie

Bhí an-oíche ar an gCeathrú Rua ar an Aoine an 2 Nollaig nuair a chruinnigh iarscoláirí agus iarmhúinteoirí i halla Scoil Chuimsitheach Chiaráin áit ar sheol iarcheannaire RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta, Tomás Mac Con Iomaire Scoil



An triúr príomhoidí: Na hiarphríomhoidí Mairtín Ó Conghaile, ar chlé, agus Tomás Ó Monacháin ar dheis, le príomhoide reatha Scoil Chuimsitheach Chiaráin Seán Mac Donncha idir eatarthu.

*Chuimsitheach Chiaráin: Caoga Bliain ag Fás* in eagar ag Cormac Ó Comhraí, leabhar nua ag comóradh caoga bliain ó bunaíodh an scoil i 1966. Insítear scéal na

scoile sa leabhar nua trí phictiúirí agus trí chuimhní cinn na n-iarscoláirí agus na n-iarmhúinteoirí.



# News and Events in our Schools

## St Aidan's Comprehensive, Cootehill



Left to right - Mr. Niall Mc Gee, Deputy Principal, Ms. Teresa Carroll, former DP, Ms. Maura O Mordha, wife of Mr. Brian O Mordha (RIP), former Principal, Bishop Leo O Reilly, Ms. Annmarie Lacey, Director Cavan Institute, Rev Nick Jones, Mr. James Mc Goldrick, former Principal, Ms. Joan Hannon, Mr. Brian Hannon, former DP, Ms. Maryann Smith, Principal, Ms. Mary Lennon, Chairperson Board of Management.

As Fionn Mc Cumhail once said *"the best music in the world is the music of what happens"*.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of St Aidan's Comprehensive, our focus has been drawn to our collective memories of past times, while we have also taken time to reflect on what the future may have in store. To mark our 50th anniversary our school community planned a weekend of celebrations on October 14th, 15th and 16th 2016.

On Friday 14th we marked the opening of our celebrations with an ecumenical service and were joined at this by former colleagues and friends of St Aidan's including Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt, President of ACCS. The service ended with the launch of a commemorative booklet and the unveiling of a commemorative plaque. Tours of the school, photographic displays and a chance to catch up with former friends ended a truly joyful day.



Deputy Brendan Smyth TD, Ms. Mary Lennon, Chairperson Board of Management, Ms. Maryann Smith, Principal, Minister Heather Humphries, Mr. John Kearney CE CMETB, Senator Joe O'Reilly.

On Saturday 15th October we hosted a local national school GAA match. This was followed by a rededication of our football field in honour of a much loved former staff member and GAA enthusiast Mr. Pete Ward. Two teams of past pupils representing Cavan and Monaghan played a match expertly refereed by Mr. Gabriel Mc Quillan and our MC on the day was Mr. Sean Mc Caffrey from Northern Sound. Again tours and photographs interspersed with music provided a chance for friends and families to remember their school days. A gala dinner dance in the local Errigal House Hotel ended what was a very special day.

Sunday 16th was marked again by an open house, the burial of a time capsule and the official opening of a biodiversity garden where we dedicated seating to deceased members of our school community.

All weekend there was wonderful laughter and fun as people/families remembered and shared memories of times past and present.

What has happened here in St Aidan's Comprehensive over the past 50 years has been wonderful, so let that music continue to live in our hearts and it will always play out in our lives as we move forward into the future.

*Maryann Smith, Principal*

# News and Events in our Schools

## St. Patrick's Comprehensive Shannon



At the recent Gala Dinner to mark the 50th Anniversary of the opening of St. Patrick's Comprehensive Shannon were Mr. Clem Garvey, former Deputy Principal, Mr. Morgan Heaphy, present Principal, Ms. Mary Davoren, former Deputy Principal, Ms. Antoinette Nic Gearailt, President ACCS, Mr. Diarmuid O'Donovan, former Principal, Mr. Hugh O'Donnell, former Principal and Deputy Principal, Mr. Jim Cooney, former Deputy Principal and Mr. David Deighan, Chairperson of the Board of Management.

## ACCS Convention 2017



The 35th ACCS Convention will take place on the 23rd, 24th & 25th March, 2017 in The Malton, Town Centre, Killarney, Co. Kerry.

### Dates to remember

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>13th January, 2017</b>  | Nominations for Presidency and motions for Convention to be submitted.  |
| <b>23rd January, 2017</b>  | Draft agenda of business and nominations for Presidency and motions to be issued to Member Boards and Executive Members. Member Boards will be invited to submit amendments to the motions. |
| <b>23rd February, 2017</b> | Latest date for receipt of amendments to the motions.   |
| <b>9th March, 2017</b>     | A final agenda will be issued to Member Boards.   |